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THE FIASCO IN CUBA:

Was Only The CIA To Blame?

NATIONAL ATTENTION once again has been focused on this country's Central Intelligence Agency by the dismal failure of the rebellion against Cuban dictator Fidel Castro.

The administration particularly pointed the finger of blame at the CIA with a frightening gesture calling for "expert" opinion from anyone who was immediately available as to what was wrong with the agency. The "experts" even included the President's younger brother, Robert Kennedy. Fortunately, greater calm now is apparent.

The committee of military and lay experts eventually named to probe the agency's mode of operation, headed by Gen. Maxwell Taylor, should reach no hasty conclusions. At this point, no one is sure how much of the blame for the administration's fiasco in Cuba can be placed on the CIA. We only can say that the final decision on U.S. participation was made by the President.

The CIA admits it underestimated Castro's strength. But it must be remembered that the actual rebels against Castro—Cubans themselves—also had their own intelligence. They were determined to attempt the invasion, firmly convinced of victory.

Allen W. Dulles, director of the CIA, has nevertheless accepted U.S. responsibility for intelligence mistakes with stoicism. He once said: "I am the head of a silent service and cannot advertise my wares. . . . For major reasons of policy, however, public relations must be sacrificed to the security of our operations."

Although the spotlight glares fiercely on the CIA as an aftermath of the Cuban incident, the agency also has scored many spectacular but little-publicized triumphs. Critics agree that the U2 operation, prior to the shooting down of pilot Francis Powers, was a tremendously successful espionage feat. The flights, which went undetected for four years, gave this country information of incalculable value, vital to building our defenses against communism.

The CIA, among many other commendable achievements, also was responsible for making public the top secret text delivered by Nikita Khrushchev when he denounced the crimes of Josef Stalin.

The CIA obviously has its credits and debits. Neither side of the ledger is without entry. It will be the work of Gen. Taylor and his group to carefully assay the organization's strength, as well as its weaknesses. Such an unhurried probe could prevent further entries on the agency's debit side.

Unquestionably, there are some weak people in the organization, just as there are some very capable ones. The misfits must be weeded out.

One important immediate improvement would be to separate the CIA's political and military operations from its intelligence activities. The agency's job should be to supply information—not also to direct operations based on such knowledge.

These are widely divergent fields that should not be intertwined.

The above editorial also appeared in the following other newspaper :

SPRINGFIELD STATE JOURNAL, ILL. - MAY 13, 1961
AURORA BEACON NEWS, ILL. - MAY 18, 1961